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EXAMINER

LOFTIS, JOHNNA RONEE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/575,283	Applicant(s) BERGH ET AL.	
	Examiner JOHNNA R. LOFTIS	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 29-48 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 29-48 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a final office action upon examination of application number 09/575,286. Claims 29-48 are pending and have been examined on the merits discussed below.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 2/25/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues claims as newly amended. The claims now include language specifying that the claimed rules include global rules and user specific rules. As pointed out in the office action mailed 8/11/2004, previously cited reference Anderson et al teaches these two distinct types of rules. At column 6, line 59 through column 7, line 8 – global rules include an initial set of rules which all leads go through to determine demographic data, data describing the nature of the customer business and calculates scores indicating whether a customer associated with the record is likely to buy the products (global rules). At column 7, lines 53-65, as a second step of the method, a search is formulated to obtain the best customer leads from the database for a given product based on preference set by individual agents (distinct rules). Rejections have been modified to account for newly amended limitations.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 29-48** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al, US 6,078,892 in view of Griggs, "Give us leads! Give us leads!"

As per **claim 29**, Anderson et al teaches configuring a lead processing system comprising a networked computer system, including accepting a specification of a plurality of users of the system (column 2, lines 54-59 – the agent submits preferences of the type of customer requested), and accepting a specification of a plurality of rules for determining at least one action of the lead processing system with respect to the users, with the plurality of rules including rules based on attributes of user relationships (column 7, lines 53-65 – distinct rules include a second step wherein the leads are delegated to an agent based upon product of interest, or preferences such as age range, location, sex, etc, inherently this information, i.e., age, location, sex, etc., reflects attributes of the users since the agent must specify their interest in working with clients holding these attributes; in addition at column 8, lines 1-6 the user can specify a max number of leads to be output from the search, this is also reflective of an attribute of the user), wherein the plurality of rules includes global rules and user specific rules (column 6, line 59 through column 7, line 8 – global rules include an initial set of rules which all leads go through to determine demographic data, data describing the nature of the customer business and calculates scores indicating whether a customer associated with the record is likely to buy the products (global rules); column 7, lines 53-65, as a second step of the method, a search is formulated to obtain the best customer leads from the database for a given product based on preference set by individual agents (distinct rules)); accepting at least one customer lead (column 8, lines 64-67 – the customer lead is selected); routing the at least one customer lead through the lead processing

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system in accordance with the rules (column 3, lines 17-39 – the customer leads are matched to the agent based on customer information and preferences set by the agent; column 7 – customer descriptive information is used to match the agent with the appropriate customer to pursue, this can be based on location, age, sex, type of business, etc.). Anderson et al does not explicitly teach receiving feedback from at least one of the users, the feedback indicating whether the lead, should be accepted, rejected or forwarded to another one of the plurality of users; re-routing the at least one customer lead, based on the plurality of rules and the received feedback from the at least one of a plurality of users to the another one of the users; and tracking and reporting an advancement of the at least one customer lead through the lead processing system. Griggs teaches the use of an automated lead-management system that allows one to track leads from its inception to close (page 2, paragraph 7). Griggs also teaches a ranking matrix that rates leads as hot, warm or cold based on predetermined questions (page 3, paragraph 14). In addition, Griggs teaches if the prospect is deemed hot or warm, a lead card detailing the inquiry is sent to the field (re-routed). Cold leads are also sent to salespeople for follow up (page 3, paragraph 14). Since both Anderson et al and Griggs both teach a customer lead system wherein leads are routed through a system to the appropriate user, it would have been obvious to modify Anderson et al to include a tracking system. This would allow the user to create revenue and manufacturing forecasts and also to evaluate return on investment for different lead-generation programs.

As per **claim 30**, Anderson et al teaches the rules comprise prioritization rules for assigning a priority to a lead based on at least one attribute of the lead (column 5, lines 3-19, lines 45-55 – the customer information is scored and arranged by score so that the records having the highest score and thus are the most relevant appear first).

As per **claim 31**, Anderson et al teaches the rules comprise assignment rules for assigning the leads to one or more users (column 3, lines 17-39 – the customer leads are matched to the agent based on customer information and preferences set by the agent; column 7 – customer descriptive information is used to match the agent with the appropriate customer to pursue, this can be based on location, age, sex, type of business, etc.).

As per **claim 32**, Anderson et al teaches the rules comprise attachment rules for determining additional information to be attached to the leads prior to further routing of the lead (column 8, lines 49-67 – when the user accepts the lead, the additional customer information which was previously withheld is output).

As per **claim 33**, Anderson et al teaches the additional information comprises specifications of a product associated with the lead (column 7, lines 27-52, lines 53-65 – when matching the customer lead with an agent, the product information is taken into account).

As per **claim 34**, Anderson et al does not explicitly teach the additional information comprises documentation of a program to facilitate the sale of at least one of a product and service associated with the lead. Griggs teaches a script that is used to determine information from the lead to better evaluate the potential sale. Since both Anderson et al and Griggs teach a customer lead system wherein leads are routed through a system to the appropriate user, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Anderson et al to include a program to facilitate the sale of the product or service associated with the lead. As taught in Griggs the benefit to having a rigid script is the ability to determine potential sales opportunities.

As per **claim 35**, Anderson et al teaches the rules comprise workflow rules for optimizing a flow of leads through the system to facilitate a rapid lead response and a high rate of lead

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closure (column 7, lines 53-65 – distinct rules include a second step wherein the leads are delegated to an agent based upon his/her own specified rules such as product of interest, or preferences such as age range, location, sex, etc; these rules are put into place to optimize the retrieval of information to ensure sales agents have an assurance that the information produced from the lead searches includes the best candidates for their products (column 1)).

As per **claim 36**, Anderson et al teaches a particular user selects at least one rule to be applied to that user (column 7, lines 53-65 – distinct rules include a second step wherein the leads are delegated to an agent based upon his/her own specified rules such as product of interest, or preferences such as age range, location, sex, etc).

As per **claim 37**, Anderson et al does not explicitly teach tracking and reporting an advancement of the at least one customer lead includes generating at least one performance report comprising a metric of performance of at least one of: (i) a source of the leads, and (ii) at least one of the users. Griggs teaches the use of an automated lead-management system that allows one to track leads from its inception to close (page 2, paragraph 7). While the lead is tracked, one user indicated they determined 91.5% of leads given are contacted (page 3, paragraph 15; this inherently shows performance of at least one of the users being reported). The information collected is useful in evaluating return on investment. Since both Anderson et al and Griggs teach a customer lead system wherein leads are routed through system to an appropriate user and tracked, it would have been obvious to modify Anderson et al to include reporting performance data to help improve return on investment.

As per **claim 38**, Anderson et al teaches the use of a marketing database where the lead information is gathered, but does not explicitly teach the source of the leads includes a marketing

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campaign. Griggs teaches customer leads resulting from marketing department's advertising and trade show efforts (page 2, paragraph 3). Since Anderson et al teaches a marketing database, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to gather customer information from a marketing campaign as taught in Griggs since those leads would be the core prospect for upcoming new business.

As per **claims 39-48**, they are the system for implementing the method of claims 29-38. Since both Anderson et al and Griggs teach a computerized system for lead optimization/generation, claims 39-48 are rejected in the same manner as claims 29-38 above.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHNNA R. LOFTIS whose telephone number is (571)272-6736. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-4:30pm.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/jl/
5/15/08

/Jonathan G. Sterrett/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623